

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 08512 100317Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----056149 100322Z /21/45

O P 091445Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8352  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY  
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 08512

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PEPR PGOV UR GW  
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRG: FRG OFFICIALS'  
IMPRESSIONS OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH

REF: BONN 8384 DTG 051649Z MAY 78 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MAY 8 BRIEFING ON BREZHNEV VISIT (SEPTTEL)  
BY BLECH, RUTH AND KUEHN THEY GAVE ME FOLLOWING  
IMPRESSIONS OF HEALTH AND SUBSTANTIVE PERFORMANCE OF  
SOVIET LEADER.

2. BREZHNEV WAS IN FULL CONTROL OF THE SOVIET DELEGA-  
TION THROUGHOUT THE VISIT. THERE WAS NO INDICATION  
THAT HE WAS BEING DIRECTED OR MANIPULATED BY OTHER  
MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION.

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3. IN HIS MEETINGS WITH GERMAN LEADERS, BREZHNEV BEGAN  
BY READING FROM PREPARED TEXTS BUT DEMONSTRATED GOOD C  
CONTROL OF HIS INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES IN ENSUING  
DISCUSSIONS. THE GERMANS HAD THE IMPRESSION, HOWEVER,  
THAT HIS CAPACITY TO FOLLOW CONVERSATIONS AND  
PARTICULARLY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A DIALOGUE LIKELY WOULD

DIMINISH AFTER SEVERAL HOURS. SINCE HIS SCHEDULE PROVIDED LONG, WELL-SPACED REST PERIODS, THIS NEVER BECAME A PROBLEM.

4. PHYSICALLY, BREZHNEV APPEARED TO BE QUITE FRAIL HE EVIDENCED SERIOUS (MOTOR) DIFFICULTIES IN ARTICULATING AND SOMETIMES MUMBLED OR MADE UNINTELLIGIBLE SOUNDS. THIS PROBLEM, WHICH APPEARED TO BE OF A DENTAL NATURE, WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT DURING BREZHNEV'S TOAST AT THE MAY 4 DINNER HOSTED BY PRESIDENT SCHEEL. ON THAT OCCASION, BREZHNEV'S MUMBLING, ALONG WITH WHAT MY INTERLOCUTORS DESCRIBED AS "MOUTH NOISES," WAS MAGNIFIED BY THE MICROPHONE AND BECAME AN OBVIOUS SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO THE SOVIET OFFICIALS PRESENT. BREZHNEV WORE A HEARING AID BUT APPEARED TO HAVE NO AUDITORY DIFFICULTIES. ANOTHER SOURCE, HOWEVER, HAS TOLD US THAT BREZHNEV'S INTERPRETER FREQUENTLY HAD TO YELL INTO THE SOVIET LEADER'S EAR.

5. BREZHNEV DRANK CONSIDERABLY, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT HIS PERFORMANCE WAS AFFECTED. AT PRESIDENT SCHEEL'S MAY 4 DINNER HE SURPRISED HIS TABLE COMPANIONS BY BRINGING HIS OWN SUPPLY OF VODKA WHICH HE PROMPTLY PRESSED UPON THOSE AROUND HIM. (ONE UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMOR HAS IT THAT BREZHNEV CONSUMED ONE AND A HALF BOTTLES OF WINE AND ONE HALF BOTTLE  
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OF VODKA ON THAT OCCASION.) BREZHNEV DID NOT SMOKE DURING THE VISIT. THE SOVIET LEADER WAS BY NO MEANS AS GREGARIOUS AS HE HAD BEEN DURING HIS 1973 VISIT. HE WAS FAIRLY SOMBER, THOUGH NOT QUITE AS SOLEMN AS HE WAS DEPICTED IN THE PRESS.

6. MY INTERLOCUTORS EXPRESSED SERIOUS DOUBT THAT BREZHNEV'S PHYSICAL CONDITION WOULD IMPROVE; THEY THOUGHT CONTINUED DETERIORATION WAS MUCH MORE LIKELY. THEY DID NOT EXPECT THE SOVIET LEADER TO VISIT THE FRG AGAIN NOR DID THEY BELIEVE HE WOULD BE IN OFFICE TWO OR THREE YEARS FROM NOW.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** REPORTS, HEALTH, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978BONN08512  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X1  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Subject:** BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRG: FRG OFFICIALS' IMPRESSIONS OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH  
**TAGS:** PEPR, PGOV, UR, GE, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014